

THE
P A T R O N:
A
COMEDY

IN THREE ACTS:

PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE IN THE HAY-MARKET;

WRITTEN BY

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
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1794.

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GRANVILLE LEVESON GOWER,

EARL GOWER,

Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's Household.

MY LORD,

THE following little Comedy, founded on a story of M. Marmontell's, and calculated to expose the frivolity and ignorance of the pretenders to learning, with the insolence and vanity of their superficial, illiberal protectors, can be addressed to no nobleman with more propriety than to Lord Gower; whose judgment, though elegant, is void of affectation; and whose patronage, though powerful, is destitute of all fastidious parade. It is with pleasure, my Lord, that the Public sees your Lordship placed at the head of that department which is to decide,

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without

without appeal, on the most popular domain in the whole republic of letters; a spot that has always been distinguished with affection, and cultivated with care, by every ruler the least attentive to either chastising the morals, polishing the manners, or, what is of equal importance, rationally amusing the leisure of the people.

The Patron, my Lord, who now begs your protection, has had the good fortune to be well received by the public; and, indeed, of all the pieces that I have had the honour to offer them, this seems to me to have the fairest claim to their favour.

But the play, stripp'd of those theatrical ornaments for which it is indebted to your Lordship's indulgence, must now plead it's own cause; nor will I, my Lord, with an affected humility, echo the trite, coarse, though classical compliment, of *Optimus patronus, pessimus poeta*: for if this be really true of the last, the first can have but small pretensions to praise; patronizing bad poets being, in my poor opinion, full as pernicious to the progress of letters, as neglecting the good,

In humble hopes, then, my Lord, of not being thought the meanest in the Muses train, I have taken the liberty to prefix your name to this dedication, and publicly to acknowledge my obligations to your Lordship; which, let me boast too, I have had the happiness to receive, untainted by the insolence of domestics, the de-
lays

DEDICATION.

v

lays of office, or the chilling superiority of rank; mortifications which have been too often experienced by much greater writers than myself, from much less men than your Lordship.

My Lord, I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect and gratitude,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

and most devoted,

humble servant.,

West-End,
June 20, 1764.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

Dramatis Personæ.

Sir THOMAS LOFTY,	} <i>Mr. Foote.</i>
Sir PETER PEPPERPOT,	
DICK BEVER,	<i>Mr. Death.</i>
FRANK YOUNGER,	<i>Mr. Davis</i>
Sir ROGER DOWLAS,	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
Mr. RUST,	<i>Mr. Weston.</i>
Mr. DACTYL,	<i>Mr. Granger.</i>
Mr. PUFF,	<i>Mr. Hayes.</i>
Mr. STAYTAPE,	<i>Mr. Brown.</i>
ROBIN,	<i>Mr. Parsons.</i>
JOHN,	<i>Mr Lewis.</i>
Two Blacks.	
Miss JULIET,	<i>Mrs. Granger.</i>

THE
P A T R O N.

ACT I.

SCENE THE STREET.

Enter Bever and Younger.

YOUNGER.

NO, Dick, you must pardon me.

BEVER.

Nay, but to satisfy your curiosity.

YOUNGER.

I tell you, I have not a jot.

BEVER.

Why then to gratify me.

YOUNGER.

At rather too great an expence.

BEVER.

To a fellow of your observation and turn, I should think, now, such a scene a most delicate treat.

YOUNGER.

Delicate! Palling, nauseous, to a dreadful degree. To a lover, indeed, the charms of the niece may palliate the uncle's fulsome formality.

BEVER.

The uncle! ay, but then you know he is only one of the group.

A 4

YOUNGER.

YOUNGER.

That's true; but the figures are all finish'd alike:—a *maniere*, a tiresome sameness throughout.

BEVER.

There you will excuse me; I am sure there is no want of variety.

YOUNGER.

No! then let us have a detail. Come, Dick, give us a bill of the play.

BEVER.

First, you know, there's Juliet's uncle.

YOUNGER.

What, Sir Thomas Lofty! the modern Midas, or rather (as fifty dedications will tell you) the Pollio, the Atticus, the patron of genius, the protector of arts, the paragon of poets, decider on merit, chief justice of taste, and sworn appraiser to Apollo and the tuneful Nine. Ha, ha.—Oh, the tedious, insipid, insufferable coxcomb!

BEVER.

Nay, now, Frank, you are too extravagant. He is universally allow'd to have taste; sharp-judging Adriel, and the muse's friend, himself a muse.

YOUNGER.

Taste! by who? underling bards, that he feeds; and broken booksellers, that he bribes. Look ye, Dick, what raptures you please, when Miss Lofty is your theme; but expect no quarter for the rest of the family. I tell thee, once for all, Lofty is a rank impostor, the bufo of an illiberal, mercenary tribe; he has neither genius to create, judgment to distinguish, or generosity to reward; his wealth has gain'd him flattery from the indigent

digent, and the haughty insolence of his pretence, admiration from the ignorant. *Voilà le portrait de votre oncle.* Now on to the next.

BEVER.

The ingenious and erudite Mr. Rust.

YOUNGER.

What, old Martin, the medal-monger?

BEVER.

The same, and my rival in Juliet.

YOUNGER.

Rival! what, Rust? why she's too modern for him by a couple of centuries. Martin! why he likes no heads but upon coins. Married! the mummy! Why 'tis not above a fortnight ago that I saw him making love to the figure without a nose in Somerset-Gardens: I caught him stroaking the marble plaits of her gown, and asked him if he was not ashamed to take such liberties with ladies in public.

BEVER.

What an inconstant old scoundrel it is!

YOUNGER.

Oh, a Dorimant. But how came this about? what could occasion the change? was it in the power of flesh and blood to seduce this adorer of virtù from his marble and porphyry?

BEVER.

Juliet has done it; and, what will surprize you, his taste was a bawd to the business.

YOUNGER.

Pr'ythee explain.

BEVER.

Juliet met him last week at her uncle's: he was a little pleased with the Greek of her profile; but,

on

on a closer enquiry, he found the turn-up of her nose to exactly resemble the bust of the princess Popæa.

YOUNGER.

The chaste moiety of the amiable Nero.

BEVER.

The same.

YOUNGER.

Oh, the deuce! then your business was done in an instant.

BEVER.

Immediately. In favour of the tip, he offered *carte blanche* for the rest of the figure, which (as you may suppose) was instantly caught at.

YOUNGER.

Doubtless. But who have we here?

BEVER.

This is one of Lofty's companions, a West-Indian of an over-grown fortune. He saves me the trouble of a portrait. This is Sir Peter Pepperpot.

Enter Sir Peter Pepperpot and two blacks.

Sir PETER.

Careless scoundrels! harkee, rascals! I'll banish you home, you dogs! you shall back, and broil in the sun. Mr. Bever, your humble; Sir, I am your entirely devoted.

BEVER.

You seem moved; what has been the matter, Sir Peter?

Sir PETER.

Matter! why, I am invited to dinner on a bar-bicu, and the villains have forgot my bottle of cayenne.

YOUNGER.

YOUNGER.

Unpardonable.

Sir PETER.

Ay, this country has spoil'd them; this same christening will ruin the colonies.—Well, dear Bever, rare news, boy; our fleet is arrived from the West.

BEVER.

It is?

Sir PETER.

Ay, lad; and a glorious cargo of turtle. It was lucky I went to Brighthelmstone; I nicked the time to a hair; thin as a lath, and a stomach as sharp as a shark's: never was in finer condition for feeding.

BEVER.

Have you a large importation, Sir Peter?

Sir PETER.

Nine; but seven in excellent order: the captain assures me they greatly gain'd ground on the voyage.

BEVER.

How do you dispose of them?

Sir PETER.

Four to Cornhill, three to Almack's, and the two sickly ones I shall send to my borough in Yorkshire.

YOUNGER.

Ay! what, have the provincials a relish for turtle?

Sir PETER.

Sir, it is amazing how this country improves in turtle and turnpikes; to which (gives me leave to say) we, from our part of the world, have not a little contributed. Why, formerly, Sir, a brace of bucks on the mayor's annual day was thought a pretty moderate blessing. But we, Sir, have
polish'd

their palates. Why, Sir, not the meanest member of my corporation but can distinguish the pash from the pee.

YOUNGER.

Indeed!

Sir PETER.

Ay, and sever the green from the shell with the skill of the ablest anatomist.

YOUNGER.

And they are fond of it?

Sir PETER.

Oh, that the consumption will tell you. The stated allowance is six pounds to an alderman, and five to each of their wives.

BEVER.

A plentiful provision.

Sir PETER.

But there was never known any waste: the mayor, recorder, and rector, are permitted to eat as much as they please.

YOUNGER.

The entertainment is pretty expensive.

Sir PETER.

Land-carriage and all. But I contrived to smuggle the last that I sent them.

BEVER.

Smuggle! I don't understand you.

Sir PETER.

Why, Sir, the rascally coachman had always charged me five pounds for the carriage. Damn'd dear! Now my cook going at the same time into the country, I made him clap a capuchin upon the turtle, and for thirty shillings put him an inside passenger in the Doncaster Fly.

YOUNGER.

A happy expedient.

BEVER.

BEVER.

Oh, Sir Peter has infinite humour.

Sir PETER.

Yes, but the frolick had like to have proved fatal.

YOUNGER.

How so?

Sir PETER.

The maid at the Rummer, at Hatfield, popp'd her head into the coach, to know if the company would have any breakfast: Ecod, the turtle, Sir, laid hold of her nose, and flapp'd her face with his fins till the poor devil fell into a fit. Ha, ha, ha.

YOUNGER.

Oh, an absolute Rabelais.

BEVER.

What, I reckon, Sir Peter, you are going to the Square?

Sir PETER.

Yes; I extremely admire Sir Thomas. You know this is his day of assembly; I suppose you will be there: I can tell you, you are a wonderful favourite.

BEVER.

Am I?

Sir PETER.

He says, your natural genius is fine; and when polish'd by his cultivation, will surprize and astonish the world.

BEVER.

I hope, Sir, I shall have your voice with the public.

Sir PETER.

Mine! O fie, Mr. Bever.

BEVER.

Come, come, you are no inconsiderable patron.

Sir PETER.

Sir PETER.

He, he, he. Can't say but I love to encourage the arts.

BEVER.

And have contributed largely yourself.

YOUNGER.

What, is Sir Peter an author?

Sir PETER.

O fie! what me? a mere dabbler; have blotted my fingers, 'tis true:—some sonnets, that have not been thought wanting in salt,

BEVER.

And your epigrams.

Sir PETER.

Not entirely without point.

BEVER.

But come, Sir Peter, the love of the arts is not the sole cause of your visits to the house you are going to.

Sir PETER.

I don't understand you.

BEVER.

Miss Juliet, the niece.

Sir PETER.

O fie! what chance have I there? Indeed, if Lady Pepperpot should happen to pop off—

BEVER.

I don't know that. You are, Sir Peter, a dangerous man; and, were I a father, or uncle, I should not be a little shy of your visits.

Sir PETER.

Psha! dear Bever, you banter.

BEVER.

And (unless I am extremely out in my guesses) that lady—

Sir PETER.

Sir PETER.

Hey! what, what, dear Bever?

BEVER.

But if you should betray me—

Sir PETER.

May I never eat a bit of green fat, if I do!

BEVER.

Hints have been dropp'd.

Sir PETER.

The devil! come a little this way.

BEVER.

Well made; not robust and gigantic, 'tis true,
but extremely genteel.

Sir PETER.

Indeed!

BEVER.

Features, not entirely regular; but marking,
with an air now, superior; greatly above the—
you understand me?

Sir PETER.

Perfectly. Something noble; expressive of—
fashion.

BEVER.

Right.

Sir PETER.

Yes, I have been frequently told so.

BEVER.

Not an absolute wit; but something infinitely
better: an *enjouement*, a spirit, a—

Sir PETER.

Gaiety. I was ever so, from a child.

BEVER.

In short, your dress, address, with a thousand
other particulars that at present I can't recollect.

Sir PETER.

Why, dear Bever, to tell thee the truth, I have
always admired Miss Juliet, and a delicate
creature

creature she is: sweet as a sugar-cane, strait as a bamboo, and her teeth as white as a negro's.

BEVER.

Poetic, but true. Now only conceive, Sir Peter, such a plantation of perfections to be devoured by that caterpillar Rust.

Sir PETER.

A liquorish grub! Are pine-apples for such muckworms as he? I'll send him a jar of citrons and ginger, and poison the pipkin.

BEVER.

No, no.

Sir PETER.

Or invite him to dinner, and mix rat's-bane along with his curry.

BEVER.

Not so precipitate; I think we may defeat him without any danger.

Sir PETER.

How, how?

BEVER.

I have a thought—but we must settle the plan with the lady. Could not you give her the hint, that I should be glad to see her a moment.

Sir PETER.

I'll do it directly.

BEVER.

But don't let Sir Thomas perceive you.

Sir PETER.

Never fear. You'll follow?

BEVER.

The instant I have settled matters with her; but fix the old fellow so that she may not be miss'd.

Sir PETER.

Sir PETER.

I'll nail him, I warrant; I have his opinion to beg on this manuscript.

BEVER.

Your own?

Sir PETER.

No.

BEVER.

Oh ho! what something new from the doctor, your chaplain?

Sir PETER.

He! no, no. O Lord, he's eloped.

BEVER.

How?

Sir PETER.

Gone. You know he was to dedicate his volume of fables to me: so I gave him thirty pounds to get my arms engraved, to prefix (by way of print) to the frontispiece; and, O grief of griefs! the doctor has moved off with the money. I'll send you Miss Juliet. *[Exit.*

BEVER.

There, now, is a special protector! The arts, I think, can't but flourish under such a Mecænas.

YOUNGER.

Heaven visits with a taste the wealthy fool.

BEVER.

True; but then, to justify the dispensation,

From hence the poor are cloath'd, the hungry fed.
Fortunes to booksellers, to authors bread.

YOUNGER.

The distribution is, I own, a little unequal: and here comes a most melancholy instance; poor Dick Dactyl, and his publisher Puff.

B

Enter

Enter Daetyl and Puff.

PUFF.

Why, then, Mr. Daetyl, carry them to somebody else; there are people enough in the trade: but I wonder you would meddle with poetry; you know it rarely pays for the paper.

DACTYL.

And how can one help it, Mr. Puff? Genius impels, and when a man is once listed in the service of the Muses—

PUFF.

Why let him give them warning as soon as he can. A pretty sort of service, indeed! where there are neither wages nor vails. The Muses! And what, I suppose, this is the livery they give. Gadzooks, I had rather be a waiter at Ranelagh.

BEVER.

The poet and publisher at variance! What is the matter, Mr. Daetyl?

DACTYL.

As Gad shall judge me, Mr. Bever, as pretty a poem, and so polite; not a mortal can take any offence; all full of panegyric and praise.

PUFF.

A fine character he gives of his works. No offence! the greatest in the world, Mr. Daetyl. Panegyric and praise! and what will that do with the public? Why, who the devil will give money to be told that Mr. Such-a-one is a wiser or better man than himself? No, no; 'tis quite and clean out of nature. A good fousing satire, now, well powder'd with personal pepper, and seasoned with the spirit of party; that demolishes a conspicuous character, and sinks him below
our

our own level; there, there, we are pleased; there we chuckle, and grin, and tofs the half-crowns on the counter.

DACTYL.

Yes, and so get cropp'd for a libel.

PUFF.

Cropp'd! ay, and the luckiest thing that can happen to you. Why, I would not give two pence for an author that is afraid of his ears. Writing, writing is, (as I may say,) Mr. Dactyl, a sort of warfare, where none can be victor that is the least afraid of a scar. Why, zooks, Sir, I never got salt to my potridge till I mounted at the Royal Exchange.

BEVER.

Indeed!

PUFF.

No, no; that was the making of me. Then my name made a noise in the world. Talk of forked hills, and of Helicon! romantic and fabulous stuff. The true Castalian stream is a shower of eggs, and a pillory the poet's Parnassus.

DACTYL.

Ay, to you indeed it may answer; but what do we get for our pains?

PUFF.

Why, what the deuce would you get? food, fire, and fame. Why you would not grow fat! a corpulent poet is a monster, a prodigy! No, no; spare diet is a spur to the fancy; high feeding would but founder your Pegasus.

DACTYL.

Why, you impudent, illiterate rascal! who is it you dare treat in this manner?

B 2

PUFF.

PUFF.

Heyday! what is the matter now?

DACTYL.

And is this the return for all the obligations you owe me? But no matter? the world, the world shall know what you are, and how you have used me.

PUFF.

Do your worst; I despise you.

DACTYL.

They shall be told from what a dunghill you sprang. Gentlemen, if there be faith in a finner, that fellow owes every shilling to me.

PUFF.

To thee!

DACTYL.

Ay, Sirrah, to me. In what kind of way did I find you? then where and what was your state? Gentlemen, his shop was a shed in Moorfields; his kitchen a broken pipkin of charcoal; and his bed-chamber, under the counter.

PUFF.

I never was fond of expence; I ever minded my trade.

DACTYL.

Your trade! and pray with what stock did you trade? I can give you the catalogue; I believe it won't overburthen my memory. Two odd volumes of Swift; the Life of Moll Flanders, with cuts; the Five Senses, printed and coloured by Overton; a few classics, thumb'd and blotted by the boys of the Charterhouse; with the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel.

PUFF.

Malice!

DACTYL.

DACTYL.

Then, Sirrah, I gave you my Canning: it was
the first set you afloat.

PUFF.

A grub.

DACTYL.

And it is not only my writings: you know,
Sirrah, what you owe to my phyfic.

BEVER.

How! a physician?

DACTYL.

Yes, Mr. Bever; phyfic and poetry. Apollo
is the patron of both: *Opiferque per orbem dicor.*

PUFF.

His phyfic!

DACTYL.

My phyfic! ay, my phyfic: why, dare you
deny it, you rascal! What, have you forgot my
powders for flatulent crudities?

PUFF,

No.

DACTYL.

My cosmetic lozenge, and sugar plumbs?

PUFF.

No.

DACTYL.

My coral for cutting of teeth, my potions,
my lotions, my pregnancy drops, with my paste
for superfluous hairs?

PUFF.

No, no; have you done?

DACTYL.

No, no, no; but I believe this will suffice for
for the present.

B 3

PUFF.

PUFF.

Now would not any mortal believe that I owed my all to this fellow.

BEVER.

Why, indeed, Mr. Puff, the balance does seem in his favour.

PUFF.

In his favour! why you don't give any credit to him: a reptile, a bug, that owes his very being to me.

DACTYL.

I, I, I!

PUFF.

You, you! What, I suppose, you forget your garret in Wine-office-court, when you furnish'd paragraphs for the Farthing-post at twelve-pence a dozen.

DACTYL.

Fiction.

PUFF.

Then, did not I get you made collector of casualties to the Whitehall and St. James's? but that post your laziness lost you. Gentlemen, he never brought them a robbery till the highwayman was going to be hang'd; a birth till the christening was over; nor a death till the hatchment was up.

DACTYL.

Mighty well!

PUFF.

And now, because the fellow has got a little in flesh, by being puff to the play-house this winter, (to which, by the bye, I got him appointed,) he is as proud and as vain as Voltaire. But I shall soon have him under; the vacation will come.

DACTYL.

Let it.

PUFF.

PUFF.

Then I shall have him sneaking and cringing, hanging about me, and begging a bit of translation.

DACTYL.

I beg, I, for translation!

PUFF.

No, no, not a line; not if you would do it for two-pence a sheet. No boil'd beef and carrot at mornings; no more cold pudding and porter. You may take your leave of my shop.

DACTYL.

Your shop! then at parting I will leave you a legacy.

BEVER.

O fie, Mr. Dactyl!

PUFF.

Let him alone.

DACTYL.

Pray, gentlemen, let me do myself justice.

BEVER.

Younger, restrain the publisher's fire.

YOUNGER.

Fie, gentlemen, such an illiberal combat—it is a scandal to the republic of letters.

BEVER.

Mr. Dactyl, an old man, a mechanic, beneath—

DACTYL.

Sir, I am calm; that thought has restored me. To your insignificancy you are indebted for safety. But what my generosity has saved, my pen shall destroy.

PUFF.

Then you must get somebody to mend it.

DACTYL.

Adieu!

PUFF.

Farewel!

[Dactyl and Puff exeunt severally.]

BEVER.

Ha, ha, ha! come, let us along to the square.

Blockheads with reason wicked wits abhor,
But dunce with dunce is barb'rous civil war.

[Exeunt.]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE CONTINUES.

Enter Bever and Younger.

YOUNGER.

POOR Daſtyl! and dwells ſuch mighty rage in little men? I hope there is no danger of bloodſhed.

BEVER.

Oh, not in the leaſt: the *gens vatum*, the nation of poets, though an irritable, are yet a placable people. Their mutual intereſts will ſoon bring them together again.

YOUNGER.

But ſhall not we be late? The critical ſenate is by this time aſſembled.

BEVER.

I warrant you, frequent and full; where

Stately Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill,
Sits, like Apollo, on his forked hill.

But you know I muſt wait for Miſs Lofty; I am now totally directed by her. She gives me the key to all Sir Thomas's foibles, and preſcribes the moſt proper method to feed them; but what good purpoſe that will produce—

YOUNGER.

YOUNGER.

Is she clever, adroit?

BEVER.

Doubtless. I like your asking the question of me.

YOUNGER.

Then pay an implicit obedience: the ladies, in these cases, generally know what they are about. The door opens.

BEVER.

It is Juliet, and with her old Rust. Enter, Frank: you know the knight, so no introduction is wanted. [*Exit Younger.*] I should be glad to hear this reverend piece of lumber make love; the courtship must certainly be curious. Good-manners, stand by; by your leave I will listen a little.

[*Bever retires.*]*Enter Juliet and Rust.*

JULIET.

And your collection is large?

RUST.

Most curious and capital. When, Madam, will you give me leave to add your charms to my catalogue?

JULIET.

O dear! Mr. Rust, I shall but disgrace it. Besides, Sir, when I marry, I am resolv'd to have my husband all to myself: now, for the possession of your heart I shall have too many competitors.

RUST,

How, Madam! were Prometheus alive, and would animate the Helen that stands in my hall, she should not cost me a sigh.

JULIET.

JULIET.

Ay, Sir, there lies my greatest misfortune. Had I only those who are alive to contend with, by assiduity, affection, cares, and caresses, I might secure my conquest: though that would be difficult; for I am convinced, were you, Mr. Rust, put up by Christie to auction, the Apollo Belvidere would not draw a greater number of bidders.

RUST.

Would that were the case, Madam, so I might be thought a proper companion to the Venus de Medicis.

JULIET.

The flower of rhetoric, and pink of politeness. But my fears are not confined to the living; for every nation and age, even painters and statuaries, conspire against me. Nay, when the Pantheon itself, the very goddesses rise up as my rivals, what chance has a mortal like me.—I shall certainly laugh in his face. [*Aside.*]

RUST.

She is a delicate subject.—Goddesses, Madam! zooks, had you been on Mount Ida when Paris decided the contest, the Cyprian queen had pleaded for the pippin in vain.

JULIET.

Extravagant gallantry.

RUST.

In you, Madam, are concentrated all the beauties of the Heathen mythology: the open front of Diana; the lustre of Pallas's eyes,—

JULIET.

JULIET.

Oh, Sir!

RUST.

The chromatic music of Clio, the blooming graces of Hebe, the empyreal port of queen Juno, with the delicate dimples of Venus.

JULIET.

I see, Sir, antiquity has not engross'd all your attention: you are no novice in the nature of women. Incense, I own, is grateful to most of my sex; but there are times when adoration may be dispensed with.

RUST.

Ma'am!

JULIET.

I say, Sir, when we women willingly wave our rank in the skies, and wish to be treated as mortals.

RUST.

Doubtless, Madam: and are you wanting in materials for that? No, Madam; as in dignity you surpass the Heathen divinities, so in the charms of attraction you beggar the queens of the earth. The whole world, at different periods, has contributed it's several beauties to form you.

JULIET.

The deuce it has! [*Afide.*]

RUST.

See, there, the ripe Asiatic perfection, join'd to the delicate softness of Europe! In you, Madam, I burn to possess Cleopatra's alluring glances, the Greek profile of queen Clytemnestra, the Roman nose of the empress Popæa—

JULIET.

JULIET.

With the majestic march of queen Befs.
Mercy on me, what a wonderful creature am I!

RUST.

In short, Madam, not a feature you have, but
recals to my mind some trait in a medal or bust.

JULIET.

Indeed! Why, by your account, I must be an
absolute olio, a perfect salamongundy of charms.

RUST.

Oh, Madam, how can you demean, as I may
say, undervalue—

JULIET.

Value! there is the thing; and to tell you the
truth, Mr. Rust, in that word Value lies my
greatest objection.

RUST.

I don't understand you.

JULIET.

Why then I will explain myself. It has been
said, and I believe with some shadow of truth,
that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*:
now, I am afraid, when you and I grow a little
more intimate, which I suppose must be the case
if you proceed on your plan, you will be horribly
disappointed in your high expectations, and soon
discover this Juno, this Cleopatra, and princess
Popæa, to be as arrant a mortal as madam your
mother.

RUST.

Madam, I, I, I—

JULIET.

JULIET.

Your patience a moment. Being therefore desirous to preserve your devotion, I beg, for the future, you would please to adore at a distance.

RUST.

To Endymion, Madam, Luna once listened.

JULIET.

Ay, but he was another kind of a mortal: you may do very well as a votary; but for a husband—mercy upon me!

RUST.

Madam, you are not in earnest, not serious!

JULIET.

Not serious! Why have you the impudence to think of marrying a goddess?

RUST.

I should hope—

JULIET.

And what should you hope? I find your devotion resembles that of the world: when the power of sinning is over, and the sprightly first-runnings of life are rack'd off, you offer the vapid dregs to your deity. No, no; you may, if you please, turn monk in my service. One vow, I believe, you will observe better than most of them, chastity.

RUST.

Permit me—

JULIET.

Or, if you must marry, take your Julia, your Portia, or Flora, your Fum-fam from China, or your Egyptian Osiris. You have long paid your addresses to them.

RUST.

RUST.

Marry! what, marble?

JULIET.

The properest wives in the world; you can't choose amiss; they will supply you with all that you want.

RUST.

Your uncle has, Madam, consented.

JULIET.

That is more than ever his niece will. Consented! and to what? to be swath'd to a mouldering mummy; or be lock'd up, like your medals, to canker and rust in a cabinet! No, no; I was made for the world, and the world shall not be robb'd of it's right.

BEVER.

[*Aside.*

Bravo, Juliet! Gad, she's a fine spirited girl.

JULIET.

My profile, indeed! No, Sir, when I marry, I must have a man that will meet my full face.

RUST.

Might I be heard for a moment?

JULIET.

To what end? You say, you have Sir Thomas Lofty's consent; I tell you, you can never have mine. You may screen me from, or expose me to, my uncle's resentment; the choice is your own: if you lay the fault at my door, you will, doubtless, greatly distress me; but take the blame on yourself, and I shall own myself extremely obliged to you.

RUST.

RUST.

How! confess myself in the fault?

JULIET.

Ay; for the best thing that a man can do, when he finds he can't be beloved, is to take care he is not heartily hated. There is no other alternative.

RUST.

Madam, I sha'n't break my word with Sir Thomas.

JULIET.

Nor I with myself. So there's an end of our conference. Sir, your very obedient.

RUST.

Madam, I, I, don't—that is, let me—But no matter. Your servant. [Exit.

JULIET.

Ha, ha, ha!

Enter Bever from behind.

BEVER.

Ha, ha, ha! Incomparable Juliet! How the old dotard trembled and tottered; he could not have been more inflam'd, had he been robb'd of his Otho.

JULIET.

Ay; was ever goddess so familiarly used? In my conscience, I began to be afraid that he would treat me as the Indians do their dirty divinities; whenever they are deaf to their prayers, they beat and abuse them.

BEVER.

But, after all, we are in an awkward situation.

JULIET.

JULIET.

How so?

BEVER.

I have my fears.

JULIET.

So have not I.

BEVER.

Your uncle has resolved that you should be married to Rust.

JULIET.

Ay, he may decree; but it is I that must execute.

BEVER.

But suppose he has given his word.

JULIET.

Why then let him recal it again.

BEVER.

But are you sure you shall have courage enough—

JULIET.

To say No? That requires much resolution, indeed.

BEVER.

Then I am at the height of my hopes.

JULIET.

Your hopes! Your hopes and your fears are ill-founded alike.

BEVER.

Why, you are determined not to be his.

JULIET.

Well, and what then?

BEVER.

What then! why then you will be mine.

JULIET.

Indeed! and is that the natural consequence? Whoever won't be his, must be your's. Is that the logic of Oxford?

BEVER.

Madam, I did flatter myself—

C

JULIET.

JULIET.

Then you did very wrong, indeed, Mr. Bever: you should ever guard against flattering yourself; for of all dangerous parasites, self is the worst.

BEVER.

I am astonish'd!

JULIET.

Astonish'd! you are mad, I believe! Why, I have not known you a month. It is true, my uncle says your father is his friend; your fortune, in time, will be easy; your figure is not remarkably faulty; and as to your understanding, passable enough for a young fellow who has not seen much of the world: but when one talks of a husband—Lord, it's quite another sort of a—Ha, ha, ha! Poor Bever, how he stares! he stands like a statue!

BEVER.

Statue, indeed, Madam; I am very near petrified.

JULIET.

Even then you will make as good a husband as Rust. But go, run, and join the assembly within: be attentive to every word, motion, and look of my uncle's; be dumb when he speaks, admire all he says, laugh when he smirks, bow when he sneezes; in short, fawn, flatter, and cringe; don't be afraid of over-loading his stomach, for the knight has a noble digestion, and you will find some there who will keep you in countenance.

BEVER.

I fly. So then, Juliet, your intention was only to try—

JULIET.

Don't plague me with impertinent questions: march! obey my directions. We must leave the
issue

issue to Chance; a greater friend to mankind than they are willing to own. Oh, if any thing new should occur, you may come into the drawing room for further instructions. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE,

A ROOM IN SIR THOMAS LOFTY'S HOUSE.

Sir Thomas, Rust, Puff, Dactyl, and others, discovered sitting.

Sir THOMAS.

Nothing new to-day from Parnassius?

DACTYL.

Not that I hear.

Sir THOMAS.

Nothing critical, philosophical, or political?

PUFF.

Nothing.

Sir THOMAS.

Then in this *disette*, this dearth of invention, give me leave, gentlemen, to distribute my stores. I have here in my hand a little, smart, fatyrical epigram; new, and prettily pointed: in short, a production that Martial himself would not have blush'd to acknowledge.

RUST.

Your own, Sir Thomas?

Sir THOMAS.

O fie! no; sent me this morning, anonymous

DACTYL.

Pray, Sir Thomas, let us have it.

ALL.

By all means; by all means.

C 2

Sir THOMAS.

THE PATRON.

Sir THOMAS.

To Phillis.

Think'st thou, fond Phillis, Strephon told thee true,
 Angels are painted fair to look like you :
 Another story all the town will tell ;
 Phillis paints fair—to look like an an-gel.

ALL.

Fine ! fine ! very fine !

DACTYL.

Such an ease and simplicity.

PUFF.

The turn so unexpected and quick.

RUST.

The satire so poignant.

Sir THOMAS.

Yes ; I think it possesses, in an eminent degree, the three great epigrammatical requisites ; brevity, familiarity, and severity.

Phillis paints fair—to look like an an-gel.

DACTYL.

Happy ! Is the Phillis, the subject, a secret ?

Sir THOMAS.

Oh, dear me ! nothing personal ; no ; an impromptu ; a mere *jeu d'esprit*.

PUFF.

Then, Sir Thomas, the secret is out ; it is your own.

DACTYL.

That was obvious enough.

PUFF.

Who is there else could have written it ?

RUST.

True, true.

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

The name of the author is needless. So it is an acquisition to the republic of letters, any gentleman may claim the merit that will.

PUFF.

What a noble contempt!

DACTYL.

What greatness of mind!

RUST.

Scipio and Lælius were the Roman Lofty. Why, I dare believe Sir Thomas has been the making of half the authors in town: he is, as I may say, the greatest manufacturer; the other poets are but pedlars, that live by retailing his wares.

ALL.

Ha, ha, ha! well observ'd, Mr. Rust.

Sir THOMAS.

Ha, ha, ha! *Molle atque facetum*. Why, to pursue the metaphor, if Sir Thomas Lofty was to call in his poetical debts, I believe there would be a good many bankrupts in the Muse's Gazette.

ALL.

Ha, ha, ha!

Sir THOMAS.

But, *à propos*, gentlemen; with regard to the eclipse: you found my calculation exact?

DACTYL.

To a digit.

Sir THOMAS.

Total darkness, indeed! and birds going to roost! Those philomaths, those almanack-makers, are the most ignorant rascals—

PUFF.

It is amazing where Sir Thomas Lofty stores all his knowledge.

DACTYL.

It is wonderful how the mind of man can contain it.

Sir THOMAS.

Why, to tell you the truth, that circumstance has a good deal engaged my attention; and I believe you will admit my method of solving the phenomenon philosophical and ingenious enough.

PUFF.

Without question.

ALL.

Doubtless.

Sir THOMAS.

I suppose, gentlemen, my memory, or mind, to be a chest of drawers, a kind of bureau; where, in separate cellules, my different knowledge on different subjects is stored.

RUST.

A prodigious discovery!

ALL.

Amazing!

Sir THOMAS.

To this cabinet volition, or will, has a key; so, when an arduous subject occurs, I unlock my bureau, pull out the particular drawer, and am supply'd with what I want in an instant.

DACTYL.

A Malebranch!

PUFF.

A Boyle!

ALL.

A Locke!

Enter

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Bever.

[*Exit.*

Sir THOMAS.

A young gentleman from Oxford, recommended to my care by his father. The university has given him a good solid Doric foundation; and when he has received from you a few Tuscan touches, the Ionic and Corinthian graces, I make no doubt but he will prove a composite pillar to the republic of letters. [*Enter Bever.*] This, Sir, is the school from whence so many capital masters have issued; the river that enriches the regions of science.

DACTYL.

Of which river, Sir Thomas, you are the source: here we quaff; *et purpureo bibimus ore nectar.*

Sir THOMAS.

Purpureo! Delicate, indeed! Mr. Dactyl. Do you hear, Mr. Bever? *Bibimus ore nectar.* You, young gentleman, must be instructed to quote; nothing gives a period more spirit than a happy Latin quotation, nor has indeed a finer effect at the head of an essay. Poor Dick Steel! I have obliged him with many a motto for his fugitive pieces.

PUFF.

Ay, and with the contents too; or Sir Richard is foully belied.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Sir Roger Dowlas.

Sir THOMAS.

Pray desire him to enter. [*Exit Servant.*] Sir Roger, Gentlemen, is a considerable East-India

proprietor; and seems desirous of collecting from this learned assembly some rhetorical flowers, which he hopes to strew, with honour to himself, and advantage to the company, in Leadenhall Street. [*Enter Sir Roger Dowlas.*] Sir Roger, be seated. This gentleman has, in common with the greatest orator the world ever saw, a small natural infirmity; he stutters a little: but I have prescrib'd the same remedy that Demosthenes used, and don't despair of a radical cure. Well, Sir, have you digested those general rules?

Sir ROGER.

Pr—ett—y well, I am obli—g'd to you, Sir Thomas.

Sir THOMAS.

Have you been regular in taking your tincture of sage, to give you confidence for speaking in public?

Sir ROGER.

Y—es, Sir Thomas.

Sir THOMAS.

Did you open at the last general court?

Sir ROGER.

I attem—p—ted fo—ur or fi—ve times.

Sir THOMAS.

What hindered your progress?

Sir ROGER.

The pe—b—bles.

Sir THOMAS.

Oh, the pebbles in his mouth. But they are only put in to practise in private; you should take them out when you are addressing the public.

Sir ROGER.

Yes; I will for the fu—ture.

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

Well, Mr. Rust, you had a *tête-à-tête* with my niece. A propos, Mr. Bever, here offers a fine occasion for you; we shall take the liberty to trouble your Muse on their nuptials. O Love! O Hymen! here prune thy purple wings; trim thy bright torch. Hey, Mr. Bever?

BEVER.

My talents are at Sir Thomas Lofty's direction; tho' I must despair of producing any performance worthy the attention of so complete a judge of the elegant arts.

Sir THOMAS.

Too modest, good Mr. Bever. Well, Mr. Rust, any new acquisition, since our last meeting, to your matchless collection?

RUST.

Why, Sir Thomas, I have both lost and gained since I saw you.

Sir THOMAS.

Lost! I am sorry for that.

RUST.

The curious sarcophagus, that was sent me from Naples by Signior Belloni—

Sir THOMAS.

You mean the urn that was supposed to contain the dust of Agrippa!

RUST.

Supposed! no doubt but it did.

Sir THOMAS.

I hope no sinister accident to that inestimable relic of Rome.

RUST.

It's gone.

Sir THOMAS.

Gone! oh, illiberal! What, stolen, I suppose, by some connoisseur?

RUST.

RUST.

Worse, worse! a prey, a martyr to ignorance :
a housemaid, that I hired last week, mistook it
for a broken green chamber-pot, and sent it
away in the dust-cart.

Sir THOMAS.

She merits impaling. Oh, the Hun!

DACTYL.

The Vandal!

ALL.

The Visigoth!

RUST.

But I have this day acquired a treasure that
will in some measure make me amends.

Sir THOMAS.

Indeed! what can that be?

PUFF.

That must be something curious, indeed.

RUST.

It has cost me infinite trouble to get it.

DACTYL.

Great rarities are not had without pains.

RUST.

It is three months ago since I got the first scent
of it, and I have been ever since on the hunt;
but all to no purpose.

Sir THOMAS.

I am quite upon thorns till I see it.

RUST.

And yesterday, when I had given it over, when
all my hopes were grown desperate, it fell into
my hands, by the most unexpected and wonder-
ful accident.

Sir THOMAS.

*Quod optanti divum promittere nemo
Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro.*

Mr. Bever, you remark my quotation?

BEVER.

BEVER.

Most happy. Oh, Sir, nothing you say can be lost.

RUST.

I have brought it here in my pocket; I am no churl; I love to pleasure my friends.

Sir THOMAS.

You are, Mr. Rust, extremely obliging.

ALL.

Very kind, very obliging, indeed.

RUST.

It was not much hurt by the fire.

Sir THOMAS.

Very fortunate.

RUST.

The edges are foil'd by the link; but many of the letters are exceedingly legible.

Sir ROGER.

A li—ttle roo—m, if you p—lease.

RUST.

Here it is; the precious remains of the very North-Britain that was burnt at the Royal-Exchange.

Sir THOMAS.

Number forty-five?

RUST.

The same.

BEVER.

You are a lucky man, Mr. Rust.

RUST.

I think so. But, Gentlemen, I hope I need not give you a caution: hush—silence—no words on this matter.

DACTYL.

You may depend upon us.

RUST.

For as the paper has not suffered the law, I don't know whether they may not seize it again.

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

With us you are safe Mr. Rust. Well, young gentleman, you see we cultivate all branches of science.

BEVER.

Amazing, indeed! But when we consider you, Sir Thomas, as the directing, the ruling planet, our wonder subsides in an instant. Science first saw the day with Socrates in the Attic portico; her early years were spent with Tully in the Tusculan shade; but her ripe, maturer hours, she enjoys with Sir Thomas Lofty, near Cavendish-Square.

Sir THOMAS.

The most classical compliment I ever received. Gentlemen, a philosophical repast attends your acceptance within. Sir Roger, you'll lead the way. [*Exeunt all but Sir Thomas and Bever.*] Mr. Bever, may I beg your ear for a moment? Mr. Bever, the friendship I have for your father, secured you at first a gracious reception from me; but what I then paid to an old obligation, is now, Sir, due to your own particular merit.

BEVER.

I am happy, Sir Thomas, if—

Sir THOMAS.

Your patience. There is in you, Mr. Bever, a fire of imagination, a quickness of apprehension, a solidity of judgment, join'd to a depth of discretion, that I never yet met with in any subject at your time of life.

BEVER.

I hope I shall never forfeit—

Sir THOMAS.

I am sure you never will; and to give you a convincing proof that I think so, I am now going to trust you with the most important secret of my whole life.

BEVER.

BEVER.

Your confidence does me great honour.

Sir THOMAS.

But this must be on a certain condition.

BEVER.

Name it.

Sir THOMAS.

That you give me your solemn promise to comply with one request I shall make you.

BEVER.

There is nothing Sir Thomas Lofty can ask, that I shall not chearfully grant.

Sir THOMAS.

Nay, in fact, it will be serving yourself.

BEVER.

I want no such inducement.

Sir THOMAS.

Enough. But we can't be too private. [*Shuts the door.*] Sit you down. Your Christian name, I think, is—

BEVER.

Richard.

Sir THOMAS.

True; the same as your father's. Come, let us be familiar. It is, I think, dear Dick, acknowledged, that the English have reached the highest pitch of perfection in every department of writing but one—the dramatic.

BEVER.

Why the French critics are a little severe.

Sir THOMAS.

And with reason. Now, to rescue our credit, and at the same time give my country a model, [*shews a manuscript*] see here.

BEVER.

A play?

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

A chef d'oeuvre.

BEVER.

Your own?

Sir THOMAS.

Speak lower. I am the author.

BEVER.

Nay, then there can be no doubt of it's merit.

Sir THOMAS.

I think not. You will be charm'd with the subject.

BEVER.

What is it, Sir Thomas?

Sir THOMAS.

I shall surprize you. The story of Robinson Crusoe. Are not you struck?

BEVER.

Most prodigiously.

Sir THOMAS.

Yes; I knew the very title would hit you. You will find the whole fable is finely conducted, and the character of Friday, *qualis ab incepto*, nobly supported throughout.

BEVER.

A pretty difficult task.

Sir THOMAS.

True; that was not a bow for a boy. The piece has long been in rehearsal at Drury-lane play-house, this night is to make its appearance.

BEVER.

To-night?

Sir THOMAS.

This night.

BEVER.

I will attend, and engage all my friends to support it.

Sir THOMAS.

That is not my purpose; the piece will want no such assistance.

BEVER.

BEVER.

I beg pardon.

Sir THOMAS.

The manager of that house (who you know is a writer himself), finding all the anonymous things he produced (indeed some of them wretched enough, and very unworthy of him) placed to his account by the public, is determined to exhibit no more without knowing the name of the author.

BEVER.

A reasonable caution.

Sir THOMAS.

Now, upon my promise (for I appear to patronize the play) to announce the author before the curtain draws up, Robinson Crusoe is advertised for this evening.

BEVER.

Oh, then, you will acknowledge the piece to be your's?

Sir THOMAS.

No.

BEVER.

How then?

Sir THOMAS.

My design is to give it to you.

BEVER.

To me!

Sir THOMAS.

To you.

BEVER.

What, me the author of Robinson Crusoe!

Sir THOMAS.

Ay.

BEVER.

Lord, Sir Thomas, it will never gain credit: so compleat a production the work of a stripling! Besides, Sir, as the merit is your's, why rob yourself of the glory?

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

I am entirely indifferent to that.

BEVER.

Then why take the trouble?

Sir THOMAS.

My fondness for letters, and love of my country. Besides, dear Dick, though the *pauci & selecti*, the chosen few, know the full value of a performance like this, yet the ignorant, the profane, (by much the majority,) will be apt to think it an occupation ill-suited to my time of life.

BEVER.

Their censure is praise.

Sir THOMAS.

Doubtless. But, indeed, my principal motive is my friendship for you. You are now a candidate for literary honours, and I am determin'd to fix your fame on an immoveable basis.

BEVER.

You are most excessively kind; but there is something so disingenuous in stealing reputation from another man—

Sir THOMAS.

Idle punctilio!

BEVER.

It puts me so in mind of the daw in the fable—

Sir THOMAS.

Come, come, dear Dick, I won't suffer your modesty to murder your fame. But the company will suspect something; we will join them, and proclaim you the author. There, keep the copy; to you I consign it for ever; it shall be a secret to latest posterity. You will be smother'd with praise by our friends; they shall all in their bark to the playhouse, and there

Attendant fail,

Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C. T. III.

SCENE CONTINUES.

Enter Bever Reading.

SO ends the first act. Come, now for the second.
 "Act the second, shewing"—the coxcomb has
 prefaced every act with an argument too, in
 humble imitation, I warrant, of Mons. Diderot—
 "shewing the fatal effects of disobedience to
 parents;" with, I suppose, the diverting scene of
 a gibbet; an entertaining subject for comedy.
 And the blockhead is as prolix—every scene as
 long as a homily. Let's see; how does this end?
 "Exit Crusoe, and enter some savages, dancing
 a faraband." There's no bearing this abominable
 trash. [*Enter Juliet.*] So, Madam; thanks to your
 advice and direction, I am got into a fine situation.

JULIET.

What is the matter now, Mr. Bever?

BEVER.

The Robinson Crusoe.

JULIET.

Oh, the play that is to be acted to-night.
 How secret you were! Who in the world would
 have guess'd you was the author?

BEVER.

Me, Madam!

JULIET.

Your title is odd; but to a genius every subject
 is good.

BEVER.

You are inclined to be pleasant.

JULIET.

Within they have been all prodigious loud in
 the praise of your piece; but I think my uncle
 rather more eager than any.

D

BEVER.

BEVER.

He has reason; for fatherly fondness goes far.

JULIET.

I don't understand you.

BEVER.

You don't!

JULIET.

No.

BEVER.

Nay, Juliet, this is too much; you know it is none of my play.

JULIET.

Whose then?

BEVER.

Your uncle's.

JULIET.

My uncle's! then how, in the name of wonder, came you to adopt it?

BEVER.

At his earnest request. I may be a fool; but remember, Madam, you are the cause.

JULIET.

This is strange; but I can't conceive what his motive could be.

BEVER.

His motive is obvious enough; to screen himself from the infamy of being the author.

JULIET.

What, is it bad, then?

BEVER.

Bad! most infernal!

JULIET.

And you have consented to own it?

BEVER.

Why, what could I do? he in a manner compell'd me.

JULIET.

I am extremely glad of it.

BEVER.

BEVER.

Glad of it! why, I tell you, 'tis the most dull, tedious, melancholy—

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

The most flat piece of frippery that ever Grubstreet produced.

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

It will be damn'd before the third act.

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

And I shall be hooted and pointed at wherever I go.

JULIET.

So much the better.

BEVER.

So much the better! zounds! so, I suppose, you would say if I was going to be hang'd. Do you call this a mark of you friendship?

JULIET.

Ah, Bever, Bever! you are a miserable politician. Do you know, now, that this is the luckiest incident that ever occur'd?

BEVER.

Indeed!

JULIET.

It could not have been better laid, had we planned it ourselves.

BEVER.

You will pardon my want of conception: but these are riddles—

JULIET.

That at present I have not time to explain. But what makes you loiter here? Past six o'clock, as I live! Why, your play is begun; run,

run, to the house. Was ever author so little anxious for the fate of his piece?

BEVER.

My piece!

JULIET.

Sir Thomas! I know by his walk. Fly, and pray all the way for the fall of your play. And, do you hear, if you find the audience too indulgent, inclined to be milky, rather than fail, squeeze in a little acid yourself. Oh, Mr. Bever, at your return let me see you, before you go to my uncle; that is, if you have the good luck to be damn'd.

BEVER.

You need not doubt that.

Exit.

Enter Sir Thomas Lofty.

Sir THOMAS.

So, Juliet; was not that Mr. Bever?

JULIET.

Yes, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

He is rather tardy; by this time his cause is come on. And how is the young gentleman affected? for this is a trying occasion.

JULIET.

He seems pretty certain, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Indeed, I think he has very little reason to fear: I confess I admire the piece; and feel as much for it's fate as if the work was my own.

JULIET.

That I most sincerely believe. I wonder, Sir, you did not choose to be present.

Sir THOMAS.

Better not. My affections are strong, Juliet, and my nerves but tenderly strung; however, intelligent people are planted, who will bring me every act a faithful account of the process.

JULIET.

JULIET.

That will answer your purpose as well.

Sir THOMAS.

Indeed, I am passionately fond of the arts, and therefore can't help—did not somebody knock? no. My good girl, will you step, and take care that when any body comes the servants may not be out of the way. [*Exit Juliet.*] Five and thirty minutes past six; by this time the first act must be over: John will be presently here. I think it can't fail; yet there is so much whim and caprice in the public opinion, that—This young man is unknown; they'll give him no credit. I had better have own'd it myself: Reputation goes a great way in these matters: people are afraid to find fault; they are cautious in censuring the works of a man who—hush! that's he: no; 'tis only the shutters. After all, I think I have chose the best way: for, if it succeeds to the degree I expect, it will be easy to circulate the real name of the author; if it falls, I am concealed, my fame suffers no—There he is. [*Loud knocking.*] I can't conceive what kept him so long. [*Enter John.*] So, John; well; and—but you have been a monstrous while.

JOHN.

Sir, I was wedged so close in the pit that I could scarcely get out.

Sir THOMAS.

The house was full then?

JOHN.

As an egg, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

That's right. Well John, and did matters go swimmingly? hey?

JOHN.

Exceedingly well, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Exceedingly well. I don't doubt it. What, vast clapping and roars of applause, I suppose.

D 3

JOHN.

JOHN.

Very well, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Very well, Sir! You are damn'd costive, I think. But did not the pit and boxes thunder again?

JOHN.

I can't say there was over much thunder.

Sir THOMAS.

No! Oh, attentive, I reckon. Ay, attention! that is the true, solid, substantial applause. All else may be purchased; hands move as they are bid: but when the audience is hushed still, afraid of losing a word, then—

JOHN.

Yes, they were very quiet indeed, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

I like them the better, John; a strong mark of their great sensibility. Did you see Robin?

JOHN.

Yes, Sir; he'll be here in a trice; I left him list'ning at the back of the boxes, and charged him to make all the haste home that he could.

Sir THOMAS.

That's right, John; very well; your account pleases me much, honest John. [*Exit John.*] No, I did not expect the first act would produce any prodigious effect. And, after all, the first act is but a mere introduction; just opens the business, the plot, and gives a little insight into the characters: so that if you but engage and interest the house, it is as much as the best writer can flatt--- [*knocking without*] Gadso! what, Robin already! why the fellow has the feet of a Mercury. [*Enter Robin.*] Well, Robin, and what news do you bring?

ROBIN.

Sir, I, I, I,—

Sir THOMAS.

Stop, Robin, and recover your breath. Now, Robin.

ROBIN.

ROBIN.

There has been a woundy uproar below.

Sir THOMAS.

An uproar! what, at the playhouse?

ROBIN.

Ay.

Sir THOMAS.

At what?

ROBIN.

I don't know: belike at the words the play-folk were talking.

Sir THOMAS.

At the players! how can that be? Oh, now I begin to conceive. Poor fellow, he knows but little of plays. What, Robin, I suppose, hallowing, and clapping, and knocking of sticks?

ROBIN.

Hallowing! ay, and hooting too.

Sir THOMAS.

And hooting!

ROBIN.

Ay, and hissing to boot.

Sir THOMAS.

Hissing! you must be mistaken.

ROBIN.

By the mass, but I am not.

Sir THOMAS.

Impossible! Oh, most likely some drunken, disorderly fellows, that were disturbing the house and interrupting the play; too common a case; the people were right: they deserv'd a rebuke. Did not you hear them cry, Out, out, out?

ROBIN.

Noa; that was not the cry; 'twas Off, off, off!

Sir THOMAS.

That was a whimsical noise. Zounds! that must be the players. Did you observe nothing else?

D 4

ROBIN.

ROBIN.

Belike the quarrel first began between the gentry and a black-a-moor man.

Sir THOMAS.

With Friday! The public taste is debauched; honest nature is too plain and simple for their vitiated palates! [*Enter Juliet.*] Juliet, Robin brings me the strangest account; some little disturbance; but I suppose it was soon settled again. Oh, but here comes Mr. Staytape, my taylor; he is a rational being; we shall be able to make something of him. [*Enter Staytape.*] So, Staytape; what, is the third act over already?

STAYTAPE.

Over, Sir! no; nor never will be.

Sir THOMAS.

What do you mean?

STAYTAPE.

Cut short.

Sir THOMAS.

I don't comprehend you.

STAYTAPE.

Why, Sir, the poet has made a mistake in measuring the taste of the town; the goods, it seems, did not fit; so they returned them upon the gentleman's hands.

Sir THOMAS.

Rot your affectation and quaintness, you puppy! speak plain.

STAYTAPE.

Why, then, Sir, Robinson Crusoe is dead.

Sir THOMAS.

Dead!

STAYTAPE.

Ay; and, what is worse, will never rise any more. You will soon have all the particulars; for there were four or five of your friends close at my heels.

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

Staytape, Juliet, run and stop them; say I am gone out; I am sick; I am engaged: but, whatever you do, be sure you don't let Bever come in. Secure of the victory, I invited them to the celebr—

STAYTAPE.

Sir, they are here.

Sir THOMAS.

Confound—

Enter Puff, Dactyl, and Rust.

RUST.

A, truly, Mr. Puff, this is but a bitter beginning; then the young man must turn himself to some other trade.

PUFF.

Servant, Sir Thomas; I suppose you have heard the news of—

Sir THOMAS.

Yes, yes; I have been told it before.

DACTYL.

I confess, I did not suspect it; but there is no knowing what effect these things will have till they come on the stage.

RUST.

For my part, I don't know much of these matters; but a couple of gentlemen near me, who seem'd sagacious enough too, declared that it was the vilest stuff they ever had heard, and wondered the players would act it.

DACTYL.

Yes; I don't remember to have seen a more general dislike.

PUFF.

I was thinking to ask you, Sir Thomas, for your interest with Mr. Bever about buying the copy: but now no mortal would read it. Lord, Sir, it would not pay for paper and print.

RUST.

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RUST.

RUST.

I remember Kennet, in his Roman Antiquities, mentions a play of Terence's, Mr. Daftyl, that was terribly treated; but that he attributes to the people's fondness for certain funambuli, or rope-dancers; but I have not lately heard of any famous tumblers in town: Sir Thomas, have you?

Sir THOMAS.

How should I; do you suppose I trouble my head about tumblers?

RUST.

Nay, I did not—

BEVER, *speaking without.*

Not to be spoke with! Don't tell me, Sir; he must, he shall.

Sir THOMAS.

Mr. Bever's voice. If he is admitted in his present disposition, the whole secret will certainly out. Gentlemen, some affairs of a most interesting nature makes it impossible for me to have the honour of your company to-night; therefore I beg you would be so good as to—

RUST.

Affairs! no bad news? I hope Miss Julie is well.

Sir THOMAS.

Very well; but I am most exceedingly—

RUST.

I shall only just stay to see Mr. Bever. Poor lad! he will be most horribly down in the mouth: a little comfort won't come amiss.

Sir THOMAS.

Mr. Bever, Sir! you won't see him here.

RUST.

Not here! why I thought I heard his voice but just now.

Sir THOMAS.

You are mistaken Mr. Rust; but—

RUST.

RUST.

May be so; then we will go. Sir Thomas, my compliments of condolence, if you please, to the poet.

Sir THOMAS.

Ay, ay.

DACTYL.

And mine; for I suppose we sha'n't see him soon.

PUFF.

Poor gentleman! I warrant he won't shew his head for these six months.

RUST.

Ay, ay: indeed, I am very sorry for him; so tell him, Sir.

DACTYL and PUFF.

So are we.

RUST.

Sir Thomas, your servant. Come, Gentlemen. By all this confusion in Sir Thomas, there must be something more in the wind than I know; but I will watch, I am resolved. *Exeunt.*

BEVER, *without.*

Rascals, stand by! I must, I will see him.

Enter BEVER.

So, Sir; this is delicate treatment, after all I have suffered.

Sir THOMAS.

Mr. Bever, I hope you don't—that is—

BEVER.

Well, Sir Thomas Lofty, what think you now of your Robinson Crusoe? a pretty performance!

Sir THOMAS.

Think, Mr. Bever! I think the public are blockheads; a tasteless, a stupid, ignorant tribe; and a man of genius deserves to be damn'd who writes any thing for them. But courage, dear Dick! the principals will give you what the people

ple refuse; the closet will do you that justice the stage has denied: print your play.

BEVER.

My play! zounds, Sir, 'tis your own.

Sir THOMAS.

Speak lower, dear Dick; be moderate, my good, dear lad!

BEVER.

Oh, Sir Thomas, you may be easy enough; you are safe and secure, removed far from that precipice that has dashed me to pieces.

Sir THOMAS.

Dear Dick, don't believe it will hurt you. The critics, the real judges, will discover in that piece such excellent talents—

BEVER.

No, Sir Thomas, no, I shall neither flatter you nor myself; I have acquired a right to speak what I think. Your play, Sir, is a wretched performance; and in this opinion all mankind are united.

Sir THOMAS.

May be not.

BEVER.

If your piece had been greatly received, I would have declared Sir Thomas Lofty the author; if coldly, I would have owned it myself: but such disgraceful, such contemptible treatment! I own, the burthen is too heavy for me; so, Sir, you must bear it yourself.

Sir THOMAS.

Me, dear Dick! what to become ridiculous in the decline of my life; to destroy in one hour the fame that forty years has been building! that was the prop, the support of my age! Can you be cruel enough to desire it?

BEVER.

Zounds! Sir, and why must I be your crutch? Would you have me become a voluntary

tary victim? No, Sir, this cause does not merit a martyrdom.

Sir THOMAS.

I own myself greatly oblig'd; but persevere, dear Dick, persevere; you have time to recover your fame: I beg it with tears in my eyes. Another play will—

BEVER.

No, Sir Thomas; I have done with the stage: the Muses and I meet no more.

Sir THOMAS.

Nay, there are various roads open in life.

BEVER.

Not one, where your piece won't pursue me. If I go to the bar, the ghost of this cursed comedy will follow, and hunt me in Westminster-hall: nay, when I die, it will stick to my memory, and I shall be handed down to posterity with the author of *Love in a Hollow Tree*.

Sir THOMAS.

Then marry: you are a pretty smart figure; and your poetical talents—

BEVER.

And what fair would admit of my suit, or family wish to receive me? Make the case your own, Sir Thomas; would you?

Sir THOMAS.

With infinite pleasure.

BEVER.

Then give me your niece; her hand shall seal up my lips.

Sir THOMAS.

What, Juliet? willingly? But are you serious, do you really admire the girl?

BEVER.

Beyond what words can express. It was by her advice I consented to father your play.

Sir THOMAS.

Sir THOMAS.

What, is Juliet appriz'd? Here, Robin, John, run and call my niece hither this moment. That giddy baggage will blab all in an instant.

BEVER.

You are mistaken; she is wiser than you are aware of.

Enter Juliet.

Sir THOMAS.

Oh, Juliet! you know what has happen'd.

JULIET.

I do, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Have you reveal'd this unfortunate secret.

JULIET.

To no mortal, Sir Thomas.

Sir THOMAS.

Come, give me your hand. Mr. Bever, child, for my sake, has renounced the stage, and the whole republic of letters; in return I owe him your hand.

JULIET.

My hand! what, to a poet hooted, hissed, and exploded! You must pardon me, Sir.

Sir THOMAS.

Juliet, a trifle: the most they can say of him, is, that he is a little wanting in wit; and he has so many brother writers to keep him in countenance, that now-a-days that is no reflection at all.

JULIET.

Then, Sir, your engagement to Mr. Rust.

Sir THOMAS.

I have found out the rascal; he has been more impertinently severe on my play, than all the rest put together; so that I am determined he shall be none of the man.

Enter

Enter Rust.

RUST.

Are you so, Sir? what, then, I am to be sacrificed, in order to preserve the secret that you are a blockhead? But you are out in your politics; before night it shall be known in all the coffee-houses in town.

Sir THOMAS.

For Heaven's sake, Mr. Rust!

RUST.

And to-morrow I will paragraph you in every news-paper; you shall no longer impose on the world; I will unmask you; the lion's skin shall hide you no longer.

Sir THOMAS.

Juliet! Mr. Bever! what can I do?

BEVER.

Sir Thomas, let me manage this matter. Harkee, old gentleman, a word in your ear: you remember what you have in your pocket?

RUST.

Hey! how! what?

BEVER.

The curiosity that has cost you so much pains.

RUST.

What, my Æneas! my precious relict of Troy!

BEVER.

You must give up that, or the lady.

JULIET.

How, Mr. Bever!

BEVER.

Never fear; I am sure of my man.

RUST.

Let me consider—As to the girl, girls are plenty enough; I can marry whenever I will: but my paper, my phoenix, that springs fresh from the flames, that can never be match'd.—Take her.

BEVER.

BEVER.

And, as you love your own secret, be careful
of ours.

RUST.

I am dumb.

Sir THOMAS.

Now, Juliet.

JULIET.

You join me, Sir, to an unfortunate bard; but,
to procure your peace—

Sir THOMAS.

You oblige me for ever. Now the secret dies
with us four. My fault. I owe him much:

Be it your care to shew it;

And bless the man, tho' I have damn'd the poet.

Exeunt Omnes.

F I N I S.



